

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 IO-13 ISO-00 AGRE-00 CEA-01 CIAE-00

COME-00 DODE-00 FRB-03 H-01 INR-07 INT-05 L-03

LAB-04 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 AID-05 SS-15 STR-04

ITC-01 TRSE-00 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 FEAE-00

OMB-01 OIC-02 /095 W

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INFO ALL OECD CAPITALS

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PASS AGRICULTURE ELECTRONICALLY

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TAGS: ETRD, GATT, EAGR

SUBJECT: MARCH 28-29 MEETING OF THE GATT INTERNATIONAL MEAT
CONSULTATIVE GROUP

1. GATT'S INTERNATIONAL MEAT CONSULTATIVE GROUP MET ON
MARCH 28-29. UNLIKE SOME OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS WHICH
HAD BEEN CHARACTERIZED BY ACRIMONIOUS EXCHANGES BETWEEN
THE EC AND AUSTRALIA, THIS MEETING TOOK PLACE IN A
HARMONIOUS ATMOSPHERE.

2. FOLLOWING A LENGTHY EXAMINATION OF THE NEW CAP FOR
BEEF AND VEAL WHICH THE EC DEL TRIED HARD TO CLARIFY,
THERE FOLLOWED SEVERAL STATEMENTS ON THE CURRENT SITUATION
AND THE OUTLOOK IN THE BEEF SECTOR.

3. ARGENTINA REPORTED THAT ITS CATTLE HERDS IN 1976

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WERE PRACTICALLY AT THE SAME LEVEL AS IN 1975 AND THAT
NO CHANGE IS EXPECTED FOR 1977. BEEF PRODUCTION IN
1976 AMOUNTED TO 2,791,000 MT AS COMPARED TO 2,438,000
IN 1975. TOTAL BEEF EXPORTS IN 1976 AMOUNTED TO 213,000
MT OF WHICH 67,900 MT WENT TO THE EEC.

4. AUSTRALIA REPORTED THAT IN THE 12-MONTH PERIOD

ENDING MARCH 31, 1977, THE AUSTRALIAN CATTLE HERD IS EXPECTED TO SHOW ITS FIRST DECLINE SINCE 1966 -- DOWN TO 32.5 MILLION HEAD. A REDUCTION IN CATTLE NUMBERS IS REPORTEDLY IN PROSPECT IN 1977 AS WELL AS IN 1978. PRODUCTION IN 1976/77 IS ESTIMATED AT 1.73 MILLION TONS, THREE PERCENT BELOW THE 1975/76 RECORD LEVEL. DOMESTIC DEMAND FOR BEEF IS EXPECTED TO DECLINE SLIGHTLY IN 1977 AMOUNTING TO SOME 550,000 TONS. SUPPLIES AVAILABLE FOR EXPORT ARE EXPECTED TO BE AROUND 705,000 TONS, OF WHICH APPROXIMATELY 571,000 TONS ARE ALREADY COMMITTED. (THE FORGOING FIGURES ARE IN TERMS OF PRODUCT WEIGHT.) AUSTRALIA CONCLUDED WITH THE OPINION THAT IN THE MAJOR BEEF PRODUCING AND CONSUMING COUNTRIES BEEF PRODUCTION IS EASING AND THAT THERE ARE PROSPECTS FOR A MODERATE IMPROVEMENT IN DEMAND. HENCE WORLD TRADE IN BEEF SHOULD SHOW SOME EXPANSION IN 1977.

5. CANADA REPORTED THAT AS OF JANUARY 1, 1977, CANADA'S TOTAL CATTLE POPULATION WAS DOWN FOUR PERCENT FROM JANUARY 1976. HIGH SLAUGHTER RATES CONTINUED. STOCKS OF BEEF AND VEAL AT THE END OF 1976 STOOD AT SOME 70 MILLION POUNDS, ABOUT 75 PERCENT ABOVE THE LEVEL OF THE PREVIOUS YEAR. IN 1976 PER CAPITA CONSUMPTION OF BEEF AND VEAL REACHED A RECORD OF 70 POUNDS.

6. THE FORGOING STATEMENTS WZCS STATEMENTS BY THE EC, JAPAN AND NEW ZEALAND WILL BE FORWARDED TO FAS/W AS SOON AS THE PERTINENT DOCUMENTATION BECOMES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AVAILABLE. U.S. STATEMENT ON THE MEAT SITUATION WAS BASED ON THE MARCH USDA LIVESTOCK AND MEAT SITUATION REPORT.

7. THE CHAIR NOTED IN CONCLUSION THAT IN CONTRAST TO THE TIME WHEN THIS GROUP WAS ESTABLISHED (1975), THERE SEEMS TO BE AN OVERALL IMPROVEMENT IN THE WORLD MARKETS FOR BEEF AND VEAL, BUT CAUTIONED AGAINST TOO OPTIMISTIC AN OUTLOOK.

8. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT THROUGHOUT THE LIFE OF THIS GROUP PROPOSALS HAVE BEEN MADE TO PREPARE SHORT TERM FORECASTS OF THE BEEF SITUATION AND THAT THESE PROPOSALS WERE STRENUOUSLY RESISTED BY THE EC BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBLE POLITICAL EFFECTS OF SUCH FORECASTS UPON THE CAP. A COMPROMISE HAS NOW BEEN REACHED.

9. THE TEXT OF THIS COMPROMISE (IMCG/W/34 OF MARCH 8,

1977) CALLS FOR THE SECRETARIAT TO "PREPARE FOR EACH MEETING A SHORT BACKGROUND DISCUSSION PAPER ON CURRENT MARKET CONDITIONS AND PROBABLY DEVELOPMENTS IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN BEEF AND BOVINE ANIMALS. THE DISCUSSION PAPER WOULD BE CIRCULATED IN ADVANCE OF EACH MEETING AND WOULD BE BASED ON INFORMATION AND VIEWS AS MAY BE SUBMITTED BY PARTICIPANTS FOR THIS PURPOSE, AND ON SUCH OTHER INFORMATION AS MAY BE AVAILABLE FROM THE ECE, THE FAO, THE OECD AND UNCTAD. THE DISCUSSION PAPER WOULD BE PREPARED BY THE SECRETARIAT ON ITS OWN RESPONSIBILITY SUBJECT TO SUCH GUIDANCE AS THE GROUP MAY PROVIDE FROM TIME TO TIME."

10. THE NEXT MEETING OF THE GROUP IS SCHEDULED FOR JULY 7 AND 8. SORENSON

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